

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News
 HD **I'm a Montreal teen – and this is why I'm marching for the climate**
 BY By SHIRLEY BARNEA
 WC 756 words
 PD 27 September 2019
 SN The Globe and Mail
 SC GLOB
 ED Ontario
 PG A15
 LA English
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Grade 10 student and member of the green team at St. George's School of Montreal.

Imagine that a mysterious virus broke out – something that doctors say was larger than anything we have ever experienced, and threatens our existence as a species. Imagine that it had already killed scores of people, and the evidence suggests the epidemic is only getting worse, but is completely preventable.

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It would be the only thing people talk about, right? Surely everyone would immediately try to do everything they could to help. It would be all hands on deck, and no one would question the urgency of the matter. Everyone would be willing to compromise their personal comfort, even if the economy suffered in the process.

So when it comes to climate change, why are our actions falling so short?

Climate change is finally making headlines, but most people are still doing little or nothing to stop it. Adults talk about how horrible the situation is, and yet most just continue living as if we had the resources of nearly five Earths to spare. Yes, there's more understanding than ever that making responsible changes on personal, corporate and governmental levels is vital – and yet few actions reflect that new awareness.

What the average Canadian is currently doing to help the environment is negligible when compared with the scale of the problem. For example, most people recycle. That's great, but the oceans are drowning in plastic all the same, and Canada is embarrassingly the No. 1 producer of trash per capita in the world.

We have grown accustomed to an extremely comfortable lifestyle, one with disastrous consequences. Is there any logic in continuing to put so many resources into products that are usually just used for a few minutes, whether it's plastic bags or takeout containers? Does it really make sense for families who live in places with good public transportation to own one or two polluting cars that require significant resources to build, and that typically sit parked for the majority of the day? This is all wrong.

The driving force behind the fight against climate change is people of my generation because we can see what our future holds – and because we see what little is being done by adults today. This is why I will march on Sept. 27, participating in a global movement that started just a year ago as the protest of Swedish teen Greta Thunberg. I'll be joining the hundreds of thousands of people expected to take to the streets of Montreal demanding climate action.

When people see us striking, protesting, compromising our comfort and calling for real action, they often applaud; they say that we are cute, that we are inspiring, that we give them hope. But we don't need your praise. Save your compliments and start doing something. It is actions that matter, not words. So act.

When considering your next car, choose a zero-emissions vehicle, or no vehicle at all. When debating where you want to go for your next vacation, scrap the carbon-heavy flights to Europe and go camping nearby instead – or, if you do fly, purchase carbon offsets. When considering your next meal out, eat in the restaurant, or avoid togo containers by bringing your own. When you're craving those amazing mangoes from across the globe, look for the same satisfaction from beautiful local berries instead. And you should call on major companies to start acting in the same way.

There is no question that Canadians are, by and large, very fortunate. We have an abundance of space, resources, peace and prosperity. So what's stopping us from meeting the goals we set for ourselves in the Paris accord?

It's not about how much it will cost, or if our efforts are significant enough – it's about how much it will cost to do nothing. It's about bringing the world together to save our common future.

Young people are often dismissed. People say we're not serious, or that we don't care, or that we simply don't understand the complexity of things. But we do. With this existential threat, many of us have come to a decision: If not everyone is there yet on climate change, we'll lead the way. And we will march in the hope that the strike will be followed by real action – not just talk.

NS gclimt : Climate Change | gcat : Political/General News | genv : Natural Environment | gglobe : Global/World Issues

RE montre : Montréal | cana : Canada | caqc : Quebec | namz : North America

PUB The Globe and Mail Inc.

AN Document GLOB000020190927ef9r0002s

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